



Programme Description

What is Writing Place, Writing Planet all about?

Geoscience (also known as Earth Science) is the study of the Earth, its systems and how we, as humans, interact with it. *Writing Place, Writing Planet* is a follow-up programme to the 2023 [Writing The Earth](#) programme piloted by the Irish Writers Centre and iCRAG Research Ireland Centre for Applied Geosciences which sought to explore geoscience topics through creative writing. *Writing Place, Writing Planet* is also inspired by *Writing the Environment*, a UCD undergraduate, place-based, creative writing module taught by Dr. Paula McGrath which has been successfully running for nearly five years.

"(My science partner) explains complex topics in digestible ways, and has pointed me in directions I would never have discovered otherwise. I'm grateful to have the opportunity to collaborate with and learn from fellow writers and iCRAG scientists, and hope to take the same spirit of openness and curiosity with me in future endeavours."
- Anon. participant of *Writing the Earth*, 2023.

When literature and science blend, insightful pieces of work can emerge. Writers try to make sense of the world through creativity and prose, while geoscientists try to do so through the scientific method. Both involve research and exploration, but it is often the writers that touch the minds of many, provoking thoughts about our shared futures on this changing planet.

Writing Place, Writing Planet aims to explore place, planet, environment and the human connections with each through collaborative writer-scientist partnerships. This programme will include online and in-person sessions and will culminate in a public showcase of new co-created work, written by the writers, inspired by knowledge sharing in writer-scientist partnerships.

Who is Writing Place, Writing Planet for?

We will select **three writers**, writing in fiction, creative non-fiction, poetry, hybrid forms or those writing for stage/live performance. We are seeking emerging writers who have had some measure of success with their writing (e.g., with journals or online publications). Candidates will sign up to participate in all aspects of the programme and must be able to demonstrate a track record as a writer. **Current UCD creative writing students will not be eligible for this programme.**

Scientists from iCRAG will also apply to be part of the programme. A small selection of scientists will be chosen to take part based on their interest in interdisciplinary work and science communication.

The writers and scientists in turn will communicate their creative and scientific interests respectively. From this, partnerships will be formed. Writing inspiration will be aided by an immersive field trip to Bull Island, a highly relevant place in the context of built and natural environment connections. Mentorship of the writers will be delivered by creative writing academics from the UCD School of English, Drama and Film and experienced writers from the former *Writing the Earth* programme.

Programme format, expectations and outcomes

The three chosen writers will receive an honorarium of €1000 for their work in the programme. The sessions will run intermittently between March-August 2026 including the public showcase (see timeline below).

By the end of the programme, writers will be expected to produce a 2000-2500 original piece of written work (e.g., essay, short story, script, series of poems, creative non-fiction piece etc). This piece of work should reflect the immersion into ideas of place, planet and humanity explored during the co-creation sessions, field trip, on-going writer-scientist partnerships and mentorship. The works will first be presented internally to the programme during an online showcase. Following this, they will be presented publicly at the Museum of Literature Ireland (MoLI) during Heritage Week 2026. iCRAG scientists will also present on their experience of co-creation and how this has impacted their geoscience research practice and communication.

Writing Place, Writing Planet is funded by [Research Ireland](#) through iCRAG and by the UCD School of English, Drama and Film. Therefore, in the interest of measuring and understanding research engagement impact, programme evaluation will be carried out. This will involve the completion of reflections, interviews and/or questionnaires by participating writers and scientists on an anonymous, informed-consent basis. This evaluation will happen at the beginning, middle and end of the programme. Evaluation results will be reported back to Research Ireland, UCD and shared with participants once the programme is complete.

Programme Timeline

Session 1: Kick off meeting and introductions

When & where: 19th March 2026, 7-8:30pm (online)

Session 2: Co-creation workshop

When & where: March 26th, 2-5pm (online)

Session 3: Immersive field trip (expenses covered)

When & where: April 14th, 10am-2pm, Bull Island, Dublin.

Session 4: Co-creation workshop

When & where: April 21st, 10am-12pm (online)

Session(s) 5: Mentorship hours

When & where: throughout May arranged ad-hoc (online)

Editorial feedback: through June-July

Session 6: Internal showcase of co-created work

When & where: August 6th, 7-8:30pm (online)

Final session: *Writing Place*, *Writing Planet* public showcase (expenses covered)

When & where: August 17th, Museum of Literature Ireland (MoLI), evening time TBC

How to apply

Please **ensure you have read this full programme description** and **check that you will be available for all the sessions listed in the timeline**. You can apply via the Google form [here](#). Application deadline is **5pm February 16th 2026**.

Note: If you are having trouble accessing the Google form to upload your application file, please email the programme co-leads Dr. Lucy Blennerhassett (iCRAG Education & Public Engagement Officer) lucy.blennerhassett@icrag-centre.org and Dr. Paula McGrath (Assistant Professor UCD School of English, Drama & Film) paula.mcgrath@ucd.ie using the subject line "WPWP writers application".

Selection process and criteria

Applications will go before a panel consisting of members within the UCD School of English, Drama and Film, iCRAG and the *Writing Place*, *Writing Planet* facilitator. All applications will be accessed for eligibility. Please ensure you read the criteria carefully in the application form. Writers will be notified about their application outcome before the programme begins.

What is The UCD Mary Lavin Centre for Creative Writing?

The UCD Mary Lavin Centre for Creative Writing is a Recognised Research Centre of University College Dublin (UCD) and is based in the UCD School of English, Drama and Film in the College of Arts and Humanities.

The Mary Lavin Centre for Creative Writing was established to enhance UCD's visibility and reputation for research, teaching, and the promotion of creative writing. It places creative writing at the forefront of practice-led arts research in the university. The Centre builds on a well-established commitment by the UCD School of English, Drama and Film to fostering and supporting creative writing. The university has long been associated with some of Ireland's greatest writers, including James Joyce, Flann O'Brien, Anthony Cronin, John McGahern, Éilís Ní Dhuibhne, Neil Jordan, Conor McPherson, Marina Carr, Colm Tóibín, Emma Donoghue, Maeve Binchy and many others. The Centre's members include acknowledged experts and world leaders in fiction, life writing, non-fiction, and poetry. Individually, they already make very significant contributions to writing and include the Booker Prize-winning novelist Anne Enright, Professor of Creative Writing; novelists Paula McGrath, Sarah Moss, and Declan Hughes; essayist and Professor of Modern Drama, Emilie Pine, as well as poets Ian Davidson, Kelly Michels, and Jonathan Creasy. The Centre Director is poet and novelist Professor Paul Perry.

The Centre aims to provide a coherent narrative for the development of creative writing in UCD and its role in the past and future of Irish culture and the Irish State. It therefore supports the development of traditional approaches to Irish writing, while taking into account the increasing breadth and range of current practice. The Centre is outward facing, making the work of creative writing in UCD visible to a wider audience through publications, research projects and public engagements, in multi and interdisciplinary contexts. The overall impact functions at a local, community, national and international levels.

What is iCRAG?

iCRAG is the Research Ireland Centre for Applied Geosciences, headquartered in University College Dublin (UCD). iCRAG develops innovative science and technologies to better understand the Earth's past, present, and future and how people are connected to it. iCRAG's research challenges cover three broad areas:

- **Earth System Change** - understanding Earth's present and past climate, environment, water systems, oceans, atmosphere and soils.
- **Earth Resources** - understanding carbon cycles, storage and sinks, economically and societally important mineral deposits/raw materials (e.g., for green technologies) and renewable energy development (e.g., offshore wind, geothermal).
- **Earth Sciences and Society** - understanding geohazards (e.g., landslides, flooding, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes) and social interactions with geoscience (e.g., perceptions of geoscience, a just energy transition, responsible decision making).

The Centre brings together approximately 150 researchers across ten Irish universities and research institutions, including University College Dublin, Trinity College Dublin, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, University College Cork, University of Galway, Maynooth University, Dublin City University, University of Limerick, Technological University Dublin and Teagasc.

iCRAG is supported by Research Ireland, Geological Survey Ireland and has, across its programmes, collaborated with a diverse range of national and international industry partners from different sectors, including transport, construction, mining, energy and environmental services. In accordance with the funding model under which we operate, our research is supported in part through industry collaboration. Our past and present partners include [Transport Infrastructure Ireland](#), [Irish Rail](#), [Boliden](#), [Silicate](#), [Geoserv](#), [Rio Tinto](#), [EcoCem](#) and [Equinor](#). These partnerships allow us to co-develop projects that address real-world challenges and deliver research that informs policy, advances industry practice and benefits society. For more information on our research and partnerships, please visit [our website](#).

Queries

For any queries related to *Writing Place*, *Writing Planet*, please contact Dr. Lucy Blennerhassett (iCRAG Education and Public Engagement Officer & programme co-lead) at lucy.blennerhassett@icrag-centre.org and **CC** Dr. Paula McGrath (Assistant Professor UCD School of English, Drama and Film and programme co-lead) at paula.mcgrath@ucd.ie and Ms. Fiona O'Rourke (Programme Facilitator) at fionamkorourke@gmail.com

